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Nicaraguans Say a Village Was Bombed

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WIWILI, Nicaragua, Dec. 8 — Unidentified combat planes dropped several small bombs on this northern village Sunday afternoon, residents and soldiers said today.

A Government communiqué said another nearby town, Murra, where there is also a Government military installation, was bombed from the air at about the same time Wiwili was hit.

It was the first time the Sandinista Government had reported that fixed-wing aircraft had bombed targets inside Nicaragua.

The apparent target in Wiwili was a 1,200-foot dirt airstrip used by Government forces in actions against United States-backed rebels. The airstrip was not hit, though several bomb craters were visible near it.

Seven people, four of them civilians, were being treated for light wounds at the health clinic in Wiwili today. Among them were two children. According to the Government, the attack at Murra killed seven soldiers and wounded nine others.

Charge of American Involvement

In a briefing for reporters, the regional military commander, Lieut. Col. Javier Carrión, said he had received intelligence information indicating that the air raids had been "directed by American officials working from bases in Honduras." But he said it had not been possible to identify the two aircraft that carried out the raid.

"We don't know what kind of planes they were, but they were combat planes," Colonel Carrión said. "As far as we know, the counter-revolution doesn't have any combat planes."

The Honduran Air Force owns a squadron of French-built Super-Mystère fighter-bombers. But Colonel Carrión said Nicaragua "has no indication" that the planes that bombed Wiwili and Murra were either owned or flown by Hondurans.

Colonel Carrión said he believed the attacks represented an escalation of American involvement in the Nicaraguan conflict. The attacking planes, he said, "have to be in the hands of the C.I.A., in the hands of the American forces that are directly supporting the counter-revolution." He said the air raid was planned "from the American base at Palmerola, where the American general staff is located."

Palmerola is a Honduran air base that has been substantially improved by United States forces since the first American units arrived in Honduras in 1984.

A United States Embassy spokesman in Tegucigalpa, Michael O'Brien, said in a telephone interview that the United States "absolutely and categorically denies" that Americans helped to plan Sunday's air raids. "No U.S. planes and no U.S. personnel of any



Agence France-Presse

IN MANAGUA: Miguel D'Escoto, Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, at a news conference at which he charged that American airplanes conducted at least five bombing raids in Nicaragua, just inside the Honduran border.

kind were involved," he said.

Congressional passage of legislation authorizing \$100 million in United States aid to the contras also removed many restrictions on the kind of help that United States agencies can give to the contras. But American soldiers remain banned from the border area.

In the wake of the raids, the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry today urged Honduras to take "energetic measures to capture the mercenary forces that operate from that country, disarm them and remove them from Honduran territory."

The protest, which was signed by Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, called on the United Nations to send a team to the border area "to prevent a greater escalation of the situation."

Nicaraguan Army officers in Wiwili and in the capital said that since Nov. 30, groups of Nicaraguan rebels have been trying to cross into Nicaraguan territory from bases in Honduras. But they said Government troops like those based at Wiwili and Murra had succeeded in preventing most infiltration.

Pressure on the Contras

Colonel Carrión said he believed the contras were particularly anxious to score military victories in the coming months.

"The counter-revolutionaries know that they are in trouble if several months pass, if March comes, if the Iran scandal in Washington becomes bigger, and they still haven't made any important progress," he said. "They

have to do something, and this kind of air attack could be the beginning of a new tactic."

Honduran officials charged over the weekend that about 700 Sandinista troops had crossed into Honduran territory and had attacked several Honduran villages. Diplomats and military analysts in Managua have said they believe that Sandinista troops have entered Honduras several times this year in pursuit of contras, but the official Nicaraguan position is that there have been no such incursions. Colonel Carrión repeated that position today.

United States military helicopters today completed two days of operations in southern Honduras, where they were reportedly transporting Honduran soldiers sent to fight what were described as invading Sandinistas. American officials said no American troops approached the border or participated in any military actions.

Airstrip and Gun Positions

The Nicaraguan Government gave few details about the attack on Murra, which like Wiwili is near the Honduran border. Capt. Rosa Pasos of the Nicaraguan Defense Ministry said the targets there appeared to be artillery emplacements, "but the artillery had already been moved from there."

Wiwili is a farming town about 10 miles from the border. Residents said in interviews that Sunday's attack had caused alarm but no great damage. There was no visible destruction in the town.

"When we saw the planes, everyone ran for cover, yelling in the street," said Amada Siles as she stood in the doorway of her adobe home. "After it was over, we saw that the attack really hadn't had much effect."

Children, excused from school to observe a religious holiday today, were especially anxious to share their recollections. "There were two planes, and at first they circled around looking for the target," said Jorge Bustamante, 12 years old. "Then they located the airstrip and made a couple of passes to drop their bombs."

Soldiers showed what they said were pieces of shrapnel they had recovered after the raid. One was marked in English, "2.75 inch rocket motor."

Soldiers in Wiwili said there was no anti-aircraft weaponry here to fire at the attacking planes Sunday, and that the defenders were limited to firing their automatic rifles. But they said that within hours after the attack, anti-aircraft guns were flown in and placed around the airstrip.